

Radio class impresses 'ham'

SHAWANO (PG) — A radio conversation with San Diego, Calif., and an introduction to computers were part of the agenda for the Shawano-Gresham School Board Monday night.

School board members heard about the Shawano's Franklin Middle School Radio Club from Al Hovey, middle school science coordinator, and the school's computer program from Eunice Berg, math coordinator.

Hovey, using his own radio equipment and federal license, runs a radio club and program that ties in lessons in geography, math and science.

Students start out with basic electricity and go on to electronics, learn Morse code and eventually become qualified to operate the bank of electronic gear that makes up Hovey's "ham" radio setup in the school.

Hovey said about 20 students are in the radio club. They come to school at 7:30 a.m. Tuesdays and devote

many noon hours to listening to shortwave radio. Students have spoken with "ham" operators in 38 countries and 19 states so far this year, Hovey said.

In a demonstration, Hovey contacted a "ham" operator in San Diego. The operator said he was impressed by his conversations with the Shawano students and wanted to bring a member of the San Diego schools to his home to try to persuade his local school district to set up a similar program.

Berg reported the same kind of enthusiasm for the computer program. Now three years old, the computer program features six computers with three levels of sophistication, she said.

Originally for the talented and gifted 8th grade pupils, the program has expanded to include pupils of different achievement levels in the 7th and 8th grades. Ten advanced math pupils from the 6th grade also

make use of the computers after school, she added.

All 7th grade math classes will have a unit on the computers starting next year, Berg said. "Computer literacy" is one of 10 recommended math skills, according to the National Council of Math Teachers, she said.

The aim is to make pupils familiar with the computers, not to make them all programmers.

One pupil has written a science project program that will be used in the coming week in all science classes. Another pupil has written a program on the stock market for social studies classes, she noted. A summer school class, with spots available for up to 66 pupils, will be offered this year.

Fred Ponschok, supervisor of career and vocational education for the district, reported to the board a "mini-visit" of two people at the Gresham High School to evaluate the vocational program April 13-15.

The evaluation is part of a five-year cycle involving all high school vocational programs, he said. The evaluations were sought by local vocational education instructors and satisfy federal mandates.

Using a structured format of visiting classes and interviewing staff, administrators and school board members, the evaluation team will prepare a written report on the Gresham program, Ponschok said.

Noting the extensive data on the vocational program, including questionnaires from graduates and employers, board member Ron Logemann asked why similar information couldn't be sought from academic or college-bound pupils.

Superintendent Gerald Thielke responded that the University of Wisconsin-Madison regularly provides a computer analysis of freshmen in their first semester there. Thielke reviewed some figures and concluded, "Our kids haven't taken a back seat to anyone at Madison."

The board also approved a lease for 34 acres of cropland in the town of Westcott to Franklin Strauss. The lease runs for five years and has an average rent of \$20 per acre per year.